



RESEARCH ARTICLE

A REFLECTION ON THE ADMINISTRATIVE ROLES OF A CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER IN GHANAIAN UNIVERSITIES: WHAT HAS REALLY CHANGED?

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ABSTRACT

The functions of chief executive officers of universities differ only slightly from chief executive officers in other organizations. As special bureaucracies with very large concentration of professors and other professional groups, chief executive officers supervise their staff to teach, research, disseminate knowledge and to collate divergent opinions towards national development. The paper consults and criticizes the views of earlier writers on chief executives of universities. This paper painstakingly examines the roles of chief executives, highlighting their backgrounds before becoming chief executives, and their roles as heads of administration upon becoming presidents or vice-chancellors. Besides observations, the study relied on literature review (Desk Study). The paper further looked at the perceptions and attitudes that promote or impede the efforts of many presidents/vice chancellors. Changing university environments through large enrolments, aging professors, and stakeholder interests, curricula reviews for relevance, quality and equity among others have resulted in changing parameters in the searches for vice-chancellors. The changing scope and demands may be useful for sitting and future vice-chancellors in their search for jobs or in their performance upon appointment. A fundamental familiarity with motivation and respect of human beings for collegiality have been behind those presidents who were acclaimed as effective executives.

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INTRODUCTION

The contributions of chief executives to the survival and growth of higher educational institutions are sometimes taken for granted until things begin to fall apart. Just like the immeasurable contributions of housewives to family harmony, the administrative roles of chief executives in the pursuit of the visions and missions of their organizations are hardly acknowledged until things are not going on well. Many chief executives in the universities do not see themselves as administrators. They prefer hanging on to their professorial origins when the ship is sailing smoothly. Copeland (1951) laments the failure of chief executives themselves to document their administrative contributions to the development of institutions they have guided successfully for many years with only casual references to their roles in their biographies and autobiographies.

Definitions and scope

Chief executive officers, as used throughout the text, refer to Vice-Chancellors/Presidents and Principals of universities and colleges. The functions of chancellors, chairmen of councils or visitors are not the subject matter of this piece. It does not also look at professional career administrators. The Registrars, their deputies and assigns are merely lieutenants and facilitators of the visions and missions of chief executives. The roles of chief executive officers as leaders and administrators should not be confused with that of Registrars as professional administrators.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study examines the administrative roles, personal and institutional requirements that promote superb performance among chief executives in higher educational settings. The analysis is based on secondary data supplemented with observations of the styles of vice-chancellors/presidents in Ghanaian institutions.

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Literature review and Findings

Executive Authority

Vice-chancellors or presidents as chief executives officers are at the apex of decision implementing bodies in universities. In general, chief executives report to chairmen of university councils or boards of directors when their engagement is outside a higher educational setting. As universities expand in students, it becomes necessary for vice-chancellors to recruit more lieutenants to assist them in the tasks before them. To such lieutenants, jobs which cannot be personally done, can be delegated by the chief executives to enable them have their sights in long-range issues on their institutions. Presidents or vice-chancellors at the time of their hiring, are called big titles. They however have to prove through demonstrated leadership that they have what it takes to command the respect of a community of scholars. They have to earn the executive authority, which is not bestowed on any executive on appointment. Copeland (1951) describes how Lowell, after retiring from Harvard as president went to live in far away Boston so that any executive difficulties of his successor, Conant, may not be attributed to his presence in Harvard. President Conant, nevertheless, experienced considerable acceptance difficulties but no one could attribute these to administrative interference by his predecessor. In almost every human endeavour, new leaders are tested by the survivors of any organization to find out the clout which the new recruits bring to the business. The test may come from subordinates, university council or the board of directors. When the leader passes these initial tests, he earns acceptability and the authority that goes with his power. Copeland (1951) reports an interesting experience narrated by one executive on how to enjoy the support of colleagues as follows: "In my 25 years as a president, I never issued an order. Every proposal was discussed with the members of my administrative organization, and unless there was general agreement as to the acceptability of the proposal, no action was taken". This suggests that many successful presidents of universities hold the principle of collegiality sacrosanctly to achieve the results that they desire.

Presidents, the American equivalent of vice-chancellors in the British tradition, must have the courage to take decisions, and by the authority vested in them, take responsibility for those decisions. Maxwell (1995) suggests that the most powerful tool for effective leaders is to delegate matters which have policy guidelines and deal with those in uncertain environments. Even today, it is popularly believed that presidents of universities must themselves be eminent scholars. This perception creates acceptability problems for many appointees. It is unlikely that a non-holder of Ph.D. or a non-professor to gain acceptability in Ghanaian university from among his teaching colleagues. Non-teaching senior members and the students of the institution over which he is appointed. Copeland (1951) points out that such a perception is neither desirable nor necessary. He observes that not all presidents are eminent scholars, but that does not seriously lessen their competence for performing their administrative tasks. The competent administrator, furthermore, has qualities which are not possessed by many eminent scholars, and the qualities of the competent administrator are no less easy of attainment than

the quality of scholarship. Bogue (1985) cites Warren Bennis' work of 1976 that universities are among the worst managed institutions although they have experts on almost every subject matter in most of them. Continuing, Bogue (1985) notes, "Too many administrators are insensitive to the relationship between their styles and the actions of those with whom they work. Some of these administrators are behaviour prophets. Their daily actions build self-fulfilling prophecies". Many vice-chancellors in Africa universities do not consider themselves as administrators, although on appointment they always know too well that, they are moving from academia into administration as chief executives. Bogue (1951) who was himself a former president and later a chancellor of a large American university concludes that "If an administrator's style has no flexibility, if it is unresponsive to variations in time, talent or risk... the same style pops out no matter what the decision stimulus is, then the administrator either is ignoring or is unfamiliar with a large body of management research indicating that the effective administrator is one who matches style with situation".

Yet, is not uncommon to hear stories of presidents who ask too many questions, pound their desks and expect their lieutenants to remain speechless as a mark of respect for the executive authority. Townsend (1972) suggests rather radically, to deal with chief executives who hardly know what is happening outside their own offices, that chief executives should not have offices. This will force them to wander and come into contact with the workers who toil for them and perhaps discover the problems, expectations, priorities and the disappointments of the people they have authority over. The habit of interacting with workers promotes acceptability of decisions that finally flow downwards for implementation. Fisher (1984) feels however, that an effective president's commands considerable respect when there is distance, style and confidence between them and their staff. This suggests that effective chief executives should allow the situations to dictate the manner and frequency of meeting the people who do the work for them.

Executive Capabilities

What kinds of capabilities should effective chief executives have to leave a good legacy to any institution? An effective administrator need not be an accomplished scholar, but if a CEO is and has adequate management skills, the combination is usually helpful in understanding the depth and complexity of problems in a university. A president should have the capacity to submit himself to a life-long learning process. An effective administrator should try to broaden his knowledge and move away from his specialized area with weakness. Chambers (1983) described as "knowing more and more about less and less about more and more". Kerr (1966) in describing the functions of a vice-chancellor/president lists the major stakeholders in universities in the following statement: A vice-chancellor must be a friend of students, a colleague of faculty, a good fellow with alumni, a sound administrator with the state legislature, a friend of industry, labour and agriculture, a persuasive diplomat with donors, a champion of education generally, a supporter of the professions, a spokesman to the press, a scholar in his own right.... A decent human being, a

good husband and father, an active member of a religious body. Above all, he must enjoy traveling in airplanes, eating his meals in public and attending public ceremonies. A former principal of the University College of Lagos, Mellanby (1958) in describing life among academics said: "Professors are on the whole an individualistic and quarrelsome lot people ; if there are officials like the Principal and the Registrar, whom they can join together in criticizing and abusing, the shared emotion may lead to co-operation on important academic matters" There is also a tendency among academics to debate long on trivial and kill important matters through long deliberations. At least, learnt in despair of one academic, offered a post-retirement lectureship by a vice -chancellor of a new university on account of the applicant's known economic hardships, suddenly became the leading tormentor of this vice-chancellor and his Registrar. He pointed out to them how wasteful they were by recruiting vagrants around them who daily hunted grasses to "slay" at their residences while most lecturers lived with snakes that caused them nightmares due to overgrown backyards. To prove his point, he succeeded in killing a small snake and holding it up like a treasured trophy travelled from his campus to show it to the vice chancellor, swearing that he was sure that the badly mutilated snake was a great descendant of larger and more poisonous ones that lurked around the whole campus. He reminded the two that it would cost far less to rid the place of snakes than to perform one funeral if one such venomous snake ever succeeded in discharging its venom unto a hapless teacher. The vice chancellor listened in total disbelief; when the staffing position in this lecturer's department improved, his application for post-retirement contract renewal was happily rejected.

There are several qualities considered to be important for success as effective executives. These include integrity, honesty and sincerity. Effective chief executives should be good listeners, team players and also be technically qualified for the type of business for which they were hired. Chief executives are also expected to have imagination, resourcefulness, patience and forbearance. One does not expect all these traits in one person, but a good mix of these qualities will enable a chief executive develop the kind of broad horizon necessary to meet the challenges in university business. Not least, chief executives, whether in manufacturing business or services sector, are expected to be visionary, committed, have "guts", focused and dependable. He should have the capability to teach people, whom he has delegated and follow up with corrective measures for subordinates to understand his performance standards. As Copeland quoted William Knudsen (1951) that "I found out a long time ago that if I yelled at a fellow, I would scare him, and when he was scared, he would lie to me. If you are going to be a boss, it is your business to help out the fellows who are actually doing the work, and if they are scared, they just won't tell you their troubles". A boss cannot sustain a shouting regime for all his life. When he is away, and there will be days when some contingencies will keep him away from the workplace, the mice will go to play in the absence of the cat. James (1930) reports that when Charles W. Elliot was asked as president of Harvard what, the most essential quality for presidency of a university was, he replied that it was "the capacity to inflict pain". His biographer, Henry James later explained that Elliot believed that a president, must

never be charged with playing favourites He must not be tempted by friendship to falter in the service of the institution whose welfare was confided in his care. He must be ready to say No as frequently as YES, and to disappoint frequently. He must be explicit when it hurts others' self-esteem to state the exact truth, lest he should leave room for misunderstanding. He tried so hard to avoid arousing hopes which it might not be possible to fulfill that his candour as disconcerting and sometimes unnecessarily discouraging. As every chief executive officer is also the chief disciplinary officer of any educational institution, it is almost always his unpleasant duty to enforce discipline and infuse some amount of sanity into the organization. James (1930), Copeland and Towel (1947) agree that informing staff of their services were no longer needed are emotionally challenging since in most instances the reasons for such hard decisions were always unpublishable. In dealing with rightsizing, postings, promotions, and salary raises, so much pain is often inflicted by the authority of the chief executive. The effective chief executive develops a hunch that frequently reminds him that he cannot please everybody. Some amount of objective discretion is necessary in the application of rewards and sanctions to separate high performers from perfunctory ones and conformists from deviants. The effective executive is the one who manages to maintain the delicate balance between competing demands for his time; and between urgent things and important matters.

The Executive Mindset

Dainty and Anderson (1995) and Kakabadse (1991) conclude that an effective chief executive should have a positive mental attitude that motivates him to pursue the high ideals of his conscience. There is no point in being hired if an executive believes that the purpose for which he is hired is impracticable. Harper (1992) and Katz (1974) think an effective executive should be tough-minded, take risks, have foresight and insight about his job. The demands of the job being varied and complex, a CEO should have the capacity to shift mental gears without being mentally and emotionally disoriented. A CEO should be able to see the big picture quickly from the large volumes of memoranda, minutes, circulars, personal contacts by staff and stakeholders of his organization. This is the breadth of the performance of the organization and its estimation in the eyes of the stakeholders. Additionally, a chief executive officer should be able to spot the urgent and important matters among the maze of mail that comes to his desk daily. If he feels overwhelmed, he needs somebody who can help him to sort out scrap and leave core business for his attention. The executive with that knack for hearing and seeing many things but attending to only those that are urgent and important is said to be focused.

A former president of Harvard University, Lowell (1938) states that "If the administrator feels tired or hurried, it means that he is doing too much, that he has not learned that his business is thinking, not routine, and hence to put off until tomorrow the routine things that must be done today, and do today the things that can be done any day, for they are the important ones. If it does not mean this it means that the time has come to pass the work into younger hands".

The executive mindset of chief executives is about distilling the best decisions for all the information scanned on the environment. Bogue (1985) describes as the fine skills and processes at play that separates the bad administrators from the good ones by posing the following questions that, what differentiates the administrator who creates a climate of dignity and optimism from the one who sows fear and depression? What makes the difference between the administrator who can lift our spirits and the one who causes us to shun adventure? What allows some administrators to lead their colleagues to self reliance, independence and integrity rather than dependence and duplicity?

It concludes that having the mind of an artist makes the difference between good and bad administrators thus: "When an artist is alive in an administrator, he will have music in his heart, poverty in his soul, ideas in his mind and fire in his spirit" (Bogue 1985). Having a positive mindset leads to positive values such that all those who accept the leadership and authority of a chief executive will go for.

The power of Leadership

There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are writers on the subject. In this context, the main ingredients of many definitions point to a process of influencing subordinates to behave in a desired manner, directing and co-ordinating the work of members, creating visions and goals for followers to work towards accomplishing the goals. Leadership skills are rare talents that are not readily available to all managers. In a sense, all leaders are managers but many unfocussed managers who lead nobody, have not prepared for leading others and are not disturbed by the lack of such potential. The common mistakes of leaders are the reasons for renewed interest in leadership studies since errors in a globalized economy can lead to irrecoverable losses in profits, market shares and staff retention. The assumption that every eminent scholar can be an effective administrator is at the bottom of most disastrous presidencies in universities. Copeland (1951) surmises that many an eminent scholar has failed to achieve success as a college president. Likewise, a great scholar does not necessarily make a great dean. The academic world furnishes abundant and frequently unhappy evidence of the truth of these statements. Scholarly ability does not necessarily imply administrative ability or proficiency in developing administrative ability in others. It appears that in academia, professors are always adversarial towards presidents who take their followership for granted, issue directives that are not traceable to any committee and want to demonstrate a great degree of independent – mindedness through circulars without prior discussions in areas committees have a definite say. Drucker (1966) points that effective leaders come in various shapes and sizes: "some are scholars and serious students, and others are unlettered. Some have broad interests, others know nothing except their own narrow area and care for little else. Some of them are self-centred, if not indeed selfish. However, here are also some who are generous of heart and mind".

In an attempt to maintain the delicate balance between pleasing stakeholders and being firm, some chief executives cut a picture of themselves that baffles others. Armstrong (1994)

cites Chester Barnard's that a good leader sometimes gives the impression that he is a rather stupid fellow, an arbitrary functionary, a mere channel of communication, a filcher of ideas.... He certainly must arbitrate to maintain order and has to be at times a mere centre of communication. If he used only his ideas, he would be somewhat like a one-man orchestra, rather than a good conductor, who is, or should be, the very essence of a leader. The choices of policy alternatives by CEOs are often informed by several years of concrete experiences, reflections, philosophical conceptualizations and experimentations, says Kolb in Dainty's (1995) work, the Capable Executive. It quote copiously from the works of former vice-chancellors or presidents, it is because of Kolb's observation cited above that practice is informed by experience and experience can be relied upon when the situations are similar to those in which particular policy recipes were very successful. It is surprising how many vice-chancellors or presidents frequently forget or ignore the variety of expertise surrounding them waiting to launch assaults on any faux pains by unsuspecting leaderships. Bogue (1985) notes, a former president himself, reminds other presidents to be more forbearing of the arguments of academics before coming to closure thus. Scientists will want an experiment and philosophers a logical argument. Lawyers will want an adversarial hearing and theologians a reference to the scripture. Sociologists will want an opinion poll and artists a panel of judges. Engineers will want a systems study and economists a costs/benefits analysis.

One wonders why many vice-chancellors who themselves have considerable verbal felicity expect colleagues to watch in glee while they single-handedly take decisions that have great potential to ruin peoples' careers or the comfort of their post-retirement lives. The proclivity for extensive disputations in the universities is nurtured by familiarity with most classical works of the Romans and Greeks which placed high premium on rhetoric and logic as evidence of wisdom. Martin (1973) admonishes that chief executives should be aware of the presence of the "Abominable No Man" and the types in organizations who criticize anything and everything as a way of gaining some recognition. Having opposed vehemently, nobody will ask them to try out a policy they have opposed, nor will they be blamed if the policy fails as predicted. To deal with such people, the effective executive needs to know his lieutenants too well; to identify the committed, dependable and loyal ones from those who are miscreants and determined to make life difficult for the leader. The pain occasioned by some of these miscreants sometimes enables a humble chief executive to sharpen his decision-making reflexes. By shaking chief executives up, they are not only sharpen their survival instincts, but compel them to study in depth the natures of their core businesses, their own abilities and exposed weaknesses. Walker (1979) and Bogue (1985) thinks that one common leadership mistake that vice-chancellors or presidents make is to assume they are the only persons with the good intention of the organization at heart, every other person is a scoundrel or villain who must be carefully watched. As a community of learned and experienced staff, many soon discover those chief executives who do not trust anybody and similarly view such CEOs with distrust. The entrenched positions may result in some productivity losses or affect the public standing of the

chief executive before his university council, board of directors or an institution's reputation.

Among other things, it is the duty of the CEO to ensure that a university stays focused in spite of any distractions. Universities pursue certain lofty ideals Lord Ashby (1958) says "Among living organisms it is assumed that the prime function is to survive.... Among social institutions, one cannot make so simple an assumption. The biological analogy breaks". It is not enough to say that the function of a university is to survive. It has functions over and above survival, in other words, it has purpose.... Unlike the biologists, the university administrator cannot eschew teleology. It must squarely face the fact that universities do not exist simply for their own sakes, as daffodils, sparrows and mice do; they have a purpose.

The CEO as Coach

The study observes, in teaching or supervising staff on what a CEO's expectations are, subordinates learn from their executives' own attitude and performance towards the vision and goals tasked to be achieve. If for instance the chief executive loses the mother and comes to office to pursue corporate goals, how can a subordinate ask for a full week off duty when the wife has a miscarriage? A CEO's values and attitudes dictate the demands followers can put in and perceive as reasonable requests. Chief executives monitor the performance of their heads of functional units who in turn keep their eyes on their supervisors down to the lowest echelon of any organization. To facilitate any meaningful performance appraisals, Drucker (1955) and Simon (1960) agree that chief executives should concentrate on the innovative and non-programmed activities which usually belong to the domain of the chief executive for the lack of clear guidelines. Zaleznik (1966) observes that effective leaders must know themselves and their subordinates not only to be able to make matches between tasks and capabilities but to determine the training needs gaps for professional development. Highets (1976) observes, "teachers and clergymen do but help furnish their minds and souls.... Men will pay more to be delivered from danger than to be assisted to develop themselves". Many performance gaps are seen as problems for the leader, not the followers. The paper posits, a chief executive needs to encourage staff to develop themselves for their own professional progression as well as meeting their corporate goals. Reddin (1970) maintains that there is no ideal leadership formula, save by examining the tasks, persons and resources. The fact that human beings like to pretend to be very supportive when the boss is around, Robert Townsend (1972) suggests that bosses can actually discover the level of rot in their organizations by pretending to be clients and calling their organizations to make enquiries while they are on short vacations. They will discover as Greanleaf (1977) did that service to humanity is not high on the priorities of most workers. The paper points out, to be an effective leader, every chief executive must be able to design and redesign the strategies and structures to accomplish the mission or vision of the organization. The goals must be clear and consistent. The effective coach works through the principal officers, deans, directors and heads of sections. A rapid expansion of enrolment far in excess of the available infrastructure poses

challenges for university operatives. It is not uncommon to see chief executives whose secretaries are busy over telephones or running all over the office and yet key areas are still unattended to. In this regards, an effective leader assigns roles and monitors expected outputs against the actual performance.

When a home-grown staff is appointed as chief executive, he must learn the ropes in the new position, know the power brokers and how to relate with them. When an outsider is appointed as CEO, he must purge himself of the philosophy of the previous employers as competitors and re-sensitise to the competitive strategies of the employer, understand the new company structure and be able to give counsel on industry-wide principles if not specific cases in the new employment. The effective executive is a great coach who is able to put together a dream team. He is involved in the selection of staff for jobs and carefully matches men to tasks. After this, he looks out for problems that may arise and handles operational and technical problems early with encouragement to the workers. He often acts as mentor, model, motivator and monitor to especially those with great potential for leadership roles. He fixes incentives according to performance and not positions. The paper observes, to be able to do this, the effective chief executive develops careful job descriptions and measurable goals for those who report to him and expects them to do the same for workers under them. Every effective executive is therefore a great teacher who is able to transfer skills to his workers and imbue them with the values he cherishes. He remains focused on the game plan, looking out for jurisdictional disputes and weak team links. The administrator sees more and speaks less and the less he speaks, the more he hears about what is going on down the operational units. The job of coaching is made easy when the recruitment process carefully matches men to jobs at hand, little supervision is called for afterwards. Safo (2004) cites Marxey Jarmen on respect and dependability as noting that: "It is not important that people like you. It is important that they respect you. They may like you but not follow you and if they respect you, they will follow you, even if they don't like you". The hard decisions in the life of an effective executive make it almost impossible to be liked but it is desirable that people are fair and consistent with sanctions and rewards application.

Bogue (198) is instructive when he admonishes that leaders should eschew being categorized as management myopes. The academic administrator who can see clearly the operational details before him each day, who pays careful attention to his in-basket, but who has little or no idea where his department college or institution is going, what it should be or is accomplishing. Making sure that the secretaries are in office on time, checking the locks in building doors, checking inventories and other administrative clucking are the examples of a typical of the management myope. There is no evidence of successful myope in academia.

Executive remoteness

The study notes, in the early nineteenth century when participatory methods were not in vogue, it was fashionable for administrators in universities to build some myths around themselves by being unavailable especially to students save at

formal ceremonies like inaugural professorial lectures, matriculations and congregations. Universities were then, a worlds apart and protected from outside agencies by their academic freedom and autonomy. Executive remoteness of chief executives in universities has lately being challenged as an inappropriate strategy because of the tall lists of deprivations and client-focussed management techniques now being tried. Vice-chancellors/presidents have to make some time to listen to admission seekers, youth leaders, union leaders, student representative councils and other non-programmed walk-in-traffic. No vice-chancellor can turn all these categories of stakeholders away today on the argument that these are not part of his daily routine and obtain a second term. The paper notes that the call to constantly make universities relevant, accessible and affordable which makes these emerging demands significant today. Additionally, many universities have grown too large and adapted multi-campus systems that make frequent face to face interactions necessary. The complaint of executive remoteness is slapped on vice-chancellors who deliberately refuse to see operatives on one-on-one interactions or are so unapproachable that when they are even in office and would love to receive visitors, nobody will contemplate such a gesture unless sent for. Executive remoteness does not only happen to stakeholders located at geographical regions remote from the headquarters but also to staff who work in the same buildings with their chief executives.

Copeland (1951) points out that the flow of minutes, circulars, memoranda, telephone calls and electronic mails cannot adequately compensate for physical interaction with staff where even with practiced smiles, an experienced chief executive can see beyond the smiles that staff have several emotional, social and economic tensions that could affect their productivity. The study posits, the complaint of executive remoteness goes with a feeling of an unsympathetic and indifferent executive to the concerns, expectations and deprivations that assail an operatives in the geographically distant satellite campuses. Although conditions may not be better for those working in the same buildings with such chief executives. They may, through the formal and informal communication processes find some explanations to the happenings that impede or aggravate their economic and social deprivations. The phenomenon of executive remoteness has resurfaced in especially the multi-campus universities because of the feeling that the location of the headquarters decides everything. Only crumps will get to the satellite campuses after all urgent expenses from the CEO's Office have been met. This perception may be false but it certainly affects the motivation of general staff who find themselves working for many years at the satellite campuses for considerations of 'fit' with no hope of posting to the headquarters. The paper emphasised, the job of a vice-chancellor or president is a challenging one. Whether in America, Europe, Asia or Africa, CEO's are bound to come face to face with colleagues and stakeholders who misconceive their roles and lash out at them. Those who put up themselves for such appointments need no further reminding as Wilbur Smooth noted: "Fame and popularity breed envy in high places and the adulation of the mob is fickle. They often take as much pleasure in tearing down the idols that they have gown tired of as they did in

elevating them in the first place. It is safer by far to live unseen and unremarked". The label of presidents as a pack of "rascals prone to avarice and greed" is never far from the minds of people who don't understand the intricacies of leading a community of scholars (Copeland, 1951). As the demands for the position of president are very high, many seemingly non performing CEOs may really have risen to their levels of incompetence as the Peter Principle tells us.

Conclusion

What has really changed in the roles of chief executives in Ghanaian universities over the last hundred odd years? In terms of application of principles, nothing radical has happened but in respect of perceptions, changing environments have led to changing perceptions of the roles of chief executives in universities. Universities having generally come out of their ivory towers to intellectualise the communities around them, they have in the process demystified the myths surrounding the superhuman rational powers of academics searching for relevance and purpose in existence. The urge for increased participation and collaboration with communities for desirable social and political support systems have occasioned more frequent interactions with their major stakeholders resulting in a deeper understanding of life in the universities. Secondly, the expansionary programmes in both curricula, staff and students without corresponding physical infrastructure in most universities have led to observable financial and other institutional deprivations. This warrant chief executives to put in more public appearances to explain the reasons for such deprivations in both the outputs, quality of life and products/services. In this respect, media-shy vice-chancellors have recently been in the media forefront as public relations managers and leaders of fund-raising teams in many countries. It would therefore appear that Townsend's (1972) perception of an accessible vice chancellor has gained ascendancy as against Fisher's recommendation that distance between presidents and their workers brings considerable respect. Global competition and the technological revolution have made the search for academic excellence not negotiable. This has increased demands on time and depth of knowledge on sitting vice chancellors/presidents. The search for suitable candidates as presidents will become more ruthless in the years ahead. Executive remoteness will certainly be a thing of the past as stakeholders of universities now demand quick satisfactory answers to issues so that remedies may be considered before the future of the youth in universities is jeopardised beyond repair. Chief executives who want to stay on their jobs must constantly come out of their comforts to explain to governments, staff, students and communities why things are emerging as they are. There is now undeniable awareness that a good education is the only way for social mobility and reducing injustice in the world. This tide of change shall sweep aside any chief executive who fails to see the urgency of this crusade and stands in the way of these crusaders. As professors usually prefer to stand by their "guts"; some will agonisingly lose their jobs rather than bow to the good counsel of colleagues.

The increasing concern for what happens inside universities will require chief executives to listen more instead of reading

from their desks. Be more transparent and objective in all their undertakings, move from task-oriented postures to people – oriented styles and rely on mentoring instead of intimidating to achieve better results in the universities. Strategic initiatives will be accepted and supported only through increased consultation, collaboration, and partnership with concerned stakeholders.

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